



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Parents encouraged to pair HPV vaccine with child's required Tdap

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summer is here again and, for many Alabama families, this will be an important time for vaccinations. College students move back home and see their family physician while young boys and girls receive physicals for the upcoming athletic seasons. Also, rising sixth-graders are due for their state-required Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis) booster shot.

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) Comprehensive Cancer Control Program recommends that these rising sixth-graders also receive the first dose of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series during the same office visit as their Tdap.

The HPV vaccine protects against cervical cancer, and Alabama has one of the highest cervical cancer incidence rates in the nation.

The vaccine is recommended for males and females, age 9-26, and is administered in a three-dose series over the course of 8-9 months. It takes all three doses to get the best protection.

Every month, the ADPH Comprehensive Cancer Control Program mails birthday cards to parents of rising sixth-graders across the state encouraging them to pair their child's required Tdap with the HPV vaccine.

"Pairing the HPV vaccine with the Tdap vaccine is an excellent opportunity to protect your child from cancer," says Dr. Grace Thomas, Assistant State Health Officer for Family Health Services, ADPH.

The body responds better to the vaccine at an early age, so just before the sixth grade is an optimal time for children to be vaccinated. If your child has missed this window, he or she can still be vaccinated anytime up to age 26.

The cost of the HPV vaccine is covered by many health insurance providers and is also available through the ALL Kids Children's Health Insurance Program and the Vaccines for Children Program. The vaccine is available through most physicians, clinics, pharmacies and all county health departments in Alabama.

Parents are advised to talk with their doctor to see if the HPV vaccine is right for their child. For more information, visit <http://www.adph.org/earlydetection/Default.asp?id=5119>

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